The recent massive power outage affecting much of the northeast United States and southeast Canada brings into focus several critical issues related to the proposed Broadband over Power Line (BPL) services.

BPL will surely render the 2 to 80 MHz portion of the radio spectrum useless. The interference levels created by BPL have been well documented in Europe and Japan. The American Radio Relay League has conducted measurements that show very strong levels of interference to the high frequency (HF) spectrum in BPL trial areas. These interference levels preclude the ability to utilize radio communications under all but the strongest signal levels.

If the wide spread August 15, 2003 power outage were a terrorist attack instead of a system failure, we would have needed the services of 2 to 80 MHz long and short range radio communications by Homeland Security, FEMA and Amateur Radio operators. These are the very services that will be hopelessly crippled by the noise and interference generated by BPL. Yes, a terrorist attack on our power distribution system also silence BPL. However, if BPL becomes reality, several years down the road nobody will have the radio equipment or know-how to operate it.

The need for an additional broadband service is questionable, especially at the price of radio spectrum destruction. There are several methods available for all consumers to obtain broadband service. Anybody who wants broadband service can get it. DSL and high speed cable are fairly universally available in urban areas of the country. Satellite broadband is available everywhere.

It also is prudent to ask if allowing the power utilities to enter the broadband telecommunications business is sensible. We would be better off as a nation if the electric utility companies concentrated on the production and transmission of power. The recent power grid problems clearly indicate they have not kept pace with technology and customer requirements. Allowing them to provide BPL services that would further dilute their resorces from production and distribution of electric power would be a serious mistake.

Respectfully submitted

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